

MICHIGAN LEGWORK

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & ECONOMIC GROWTH

APRIL 2005

State of DLEG Meeting Focuses on Implementation Plan Progress

“WE HAVE MADE A GREAT DEAL OF progress this past year, and most of that is due to the fact that together we developed a plan and we are now working on that plan,” said DLEG Director David C. Hollister at the latest State of DLEG meeting, held March 17 at Lansing Community College’s new west campus.

More than 200 DLEG employees attended the half-day session, which showcased implementation plans for the department’s four major initiatives and featured a presentation by the director of Detroit’s Super Bowl committee.

Don Jakeway, director of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and team leader for the “Retain and Grow” initiative, reported that the top two priorities of his team are to continue to promote and invest in Michigan’s emerging technology economy through the Technology Tri-Corridor, and to retain and expand Michigan’s rich automotive endowment, particularly through research and development.

Progress on the “Entrepreneurship” initiative was presented by Bureau of Commercial Services Director Andrew Metcalf, who said that a new entrepreneurship website will be launched April 30, and that a new Enterprise Advocate Office (EAO) — a separate but aligned function of the MEDC business ombudsman — will be operational by June 30.

Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) Director Michael DeVos and Rick Laber, MSHDA’s director of Finance and Single Family, presented their team’s implementation blueprint for the “Urban Revitalization” initiative. Plans include grants to 30 neighborhoods designated as “Cool Cities

neighborhoods” and five high profile, mixed-use projects, as well as a pilot program for redevelopment readiness standards and certification.

Brenda Njiwaji, director of the Bureau of Workforce Development, reported on the “Workforce Development” initiative. The top two priorities of her team are to implement Gov. Jennifer Granholm’s Michigan Opportunity Partnership, which will place an additional 30,000 unemployed Michiganders in jobs, and to implement the Adult Education distance learning pilots recommended by Lt. Gov. John Cherry’s Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth.

Special guest Susan Sherer, executive director of the Super Bowl XL Host Committee, spoke about the economic importance to Detroit and Michigan of having the 2006 Super Bowl game played in Detroit. She said this is “a huge opportunity to sell the world on doing business in Michigan.”

Another highlight of the meeting was the showing of a newly developed video on the department’s “Action Planning.” Included are excerpts from Gov. Granholm’s State of the State messages; Director Hollister discussing the Leadership Council and the teamwork it has exhibited in setting priorities; and Organizational Development Director Jim Smiertka describing how the Employee Growth and De-



DLEG Director David C. Hollister speaks at the March 17 State of DLEG meeting. For highlights of his speech, please see “A Message from the Director” on page 2.

velopment Team combines the vision, values and priorities of the department and links them to meaningful action steps toward real progress. The Office of Media Technology produced the 16-minute video.

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A Message from the Director

As you read on page one, a State of DLEG meeting was held last month to provide DLEG administrators and managers with an update on the progress we have made on our four major initiatives. In this column, I would like to share with you some of the comments I made at that meeting. I believe this information is so important that I'm including it in speeches that I give around the state.

Futurists say that business — with its traditional highs and lows — will no longer be cyclical, as in the past. Rather, a fundamental change in business is taking place. Some key trends are driving this fundamental change:

First, our population is aging. Those 85 and older is the fastest-growing segment of our population — increasing four times as fast as other age groups. In addition, there are 77 million baby boomers, and many are now approaching retirement age. Our health care system is becoming overburdened as a result. On the positive side, career opportunities in health care are becoming abundant.

Second, our economy is changing. We are shifting from a manufacturing economy to an information- and services-based economy. The workplace is certainly becoming more technologically advanced. Workers today must not only be functionally literate, but also *technologically* literate. Will Daggett, founder and president of the International Center for Leadership in Education, says the new basics for our students must be technical reading and writing, applied physics, statistics and logic, as well as foreign languages.

Lt. Gov. John Cherry's Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth, in its report released last December, said that a high school education is no longer enough to compete for a good job. Two years of study beyond high school is the new minimum for a promising career.

Third, our economy is becoming more international. We all remember when General Motors, Ford and Chrysler were the Big Three. Today, the big three are General Motors, Ford and Toyota, with DaimlerChrysler coming in fourth. One in six Americans now works for a foreign-owned company.

The challenges before us in Michigan are these:

- ❖ Retain our current economic base,
- ❖ Diversify our economy and
- ❖ Ready our workforce to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow

The Department of Labor & Economic Growth is working vigorously with Gov. Granholm to meet these challenges. As you read on page one, we have not only developed plans to accomplish our major goals, but we are also beginning to implement these plans. *Our overall goal is creating jobs today and jobs tomorrow.*

I believe the two greatest things we have going for us in DLEG are our talented, hard working employees and our attention to planning. My favorite philosopher Yogi Berra once said, "You've got to be very careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there."

Well, we have a plan to get us where we want to go, and we have the best staff to take us there, so I am confident of our arrival. Thank you for your continuing support and dedication.

Sincerely,

David C. Hollister

Pam Yager Named Executive Assistant to Deputy Director Bob Swanson

Pam Yager, a policy analyst with the Senate Democratic Office since 1999, has been appointed the executive assistant to DLEG Deputy Director Bob Swanson.

"I am pleased to announce the appointment of Pam Yager as a program specialist in the Director's Office," Bob said. "She brings to the job an understanding of department programs, the legislature, and the budget process."

While with the Senate Democratic Office, Pam worked with the Economic Development and Small Business and Regulatory Reform Committee and the Banking and Financial Institutions Committee.

Previously, she was an aide to former State Sen. Mary Schroer of Ann Arbor.

Pam is a political science graduate of The University of Michigan.

Please extend a warm welcome to Pam, whose office is on the fourth floor of the Ottawa Building.



Pam Yager



Pat Cannon Tapped by Governor to Be Pitcher on Tigers' Opening Day

Gov. Jennifer Granholm tapped long-time Detroit Tigers fan Patrick Cannon to be her designated pitcher at the Detroit Tigers' Opening Day ceremonies at Comerica Park on Monday, April 4.

Pat is director of the Michigan Commission for the Blind within DLEG and also serves as the governor's disability policy advisor and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) state coordinator.

Gov. Granholm had been invited by the Tigers to throw a ceremonial first pitch, but extended the honor to Pat, who has attended more than 40 Detroit Tigers' Opening Day ceremonies and some 500 Detroit Tigers' baseball games since 1955.

"Everyday, I represent the people of Michigan, but on Opening Day, I'm representing Detroit Tigers' fans across the state," said the governor. "That's because Opening Day is for the fans and when it comes to fans, Pat Cannon is second to no one."

The governor said she invited Pat, who is blind, to share the Opening Day honor with her not only because of his loyalty to the Tigers over the years, but also as a way to demonstrate that people with disabilities can do just about anything if they have the right attitude, training and support.



Pat Cannon

Welcome, SOAHR Employees

The Department of Labor & Economic Growth is welcoming 79 employees who are part of the new State Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules (SOAHR).

Gov. Jennifer Granholm signed an executive order on Jan. 14 that abolished the Office of Regulatory Reform and created SOAHR as a Type I agency effective March 27. The move streamlines state administrative law, rule and hearings functions from across state government into one centralized office housed in DLEG.

SOAHR is charged with leading state efforts to continually evaluate policies and procedures for conducting administrative hearings and for the processing and review of administrative rules with the goal of developing best practices in these areas.

Limerick Contest Helps DLEG Celebrate St. Patrick's Day



Trivia question: Where did the word "limerick" come from?

Answer: From Ireland, as Limerick is the name of a borough in southwestern Ireland.

So, to properly celebrate St. Patrick's Day, the DLEG Fun Committee came up with the idea of a limerick contest. More than 50 limericks were submitted by DLEG employees, which were posted March 16 along the walls of the Training Room on the fourth floor of the Ottawa Building.

Those who donated a dollar for a "walking taco," bottled water, and dessert were able to read the limericks lining the walls, then vote for their favorite. The event drew 130 participants.

The first-place winner was Linda Schroeder in the Budget Division of Finance & Administrative Services. Her limerick won her a gift certificate to the Claddagh Irish Pub in Lansing:

"Me thinks I've had too much to drink
For I got sick and threw up in the sink
Seems I had a wee too much green beer
For now my car I can't steer
And I've landed my arse in the clink."

Second-place honors — a gift certificate to Kelly's Downtown, Lansing — went to Shawn Worden, Finance Division, Finance and Administrative Services. Her limerick:

"Limericks are hard to rhyme
And they take up too much time
But, I'll give it a shot
So, here's what I got
This limerick ain't worth a dime"

Third place was captured by student assistant Todd McMyler in the Office of Financial and Insurance Services. He received a gift certificate to the Irish Pub in Lansing for this limerick:

"St. Patty's day O so much fun
Cause you forget it after it's done
You drink so much beer
That your mind is wiped clear
And you head out for a naked run."

The fourth place winner was Richard Hamm, who works for the Michigan Employment Security Board of Review. He also won a gift certificate to the Irish Pub for writing these lines:

"My brother is with the Army in Iraq.
I don't know when he'll be coming back
So until that day
I'll kneel and pray,
That God will keep him on track."

'Breaking Traditions' Recognized Nationally

Michigan's "Breaking Traditions" student award program developed by DLEG's Office of Career and Technical Preparation (OCTP) has been recognized nationally by the 2004 "Programs That Work: Preparing Students for Nontraditional Careers" Award.

The Association for Career and Technical Education, National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education Consortium, National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity, and National Women's Law Center created the national award to recognize local and/or state educational agencies, programs, and/or schools that have improved students' access to and completion of career and technical education programs that are nontraditional for their gender.

"Breaking Traditions," which received an honorable mention, was developed by OCTP in 2002. Since then, 69 students from around the state

have received awards for outstanding achievements in pursuing nontraditional careers for their gender and inspiring others to follow.

Michigan's "Breaking Traditions" program will be recognized at a briefing for the U.S. Congress and the media on Capitol Hill this spring and at upcoming national conferences.

Congratulations to OCTP Director Patty Cantú and her staff — especially Norma Tims, gender equity consultant — who have coordinated programs, services and activities to eliminate gender bias and stereotyping in secondary career and technical education programs.

The 2005 Michigan Breaking Traditions Awards Ceremony will take place Tuesday, May 17, at The Forum, Michigan Library and Historical Center, Lansing.



Shawn Worden



Todd McMyler



Richard Hamm

Professional Activities

Congratulations to **Sandee Raappana**, a counselor with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) based in Sault Ste. Marie, who was honored by the Eastern Upper Peninsula Michigan Works! Workforce Development Board at a recognition breakfast held March 30. Sandee was selected as an “exceptional community partner in Chippewa County” for her continuous support of Michigan Works! programs and career development activities.

Best wishes go to **Edmund Phillips**, the Michigan Employment Relations Commission’s mediation supervisor for the Detroit Region, who was honored last month at a surprise celebration of his

45 years of state service. Ed has been employed by the state as a mediator since March 27, 1960, and became a “working” supervisor of mediation in 1987. He has mediated hundreds of labor disputes, including the Detroit newspaper strikes of 1964, 1967 and 1995. Ed is a U. S. Navy veteran of WW II, and served in the battles of Iwo Jima, Okinawa and the Phillipine Islands.

In 2004, 17 Workers’ Compensation Agency (WCA) staff members — with combined state service totaling 445 years — reached milestones of continuous service. WCA recognized these team members in ceremonies on Feb.14 at the Funds



Dennis Morrill

Administration offices and on Feb.15 at the General Office Building. For those based outside of Lansing, agency administrators honored them during visits to their worksites. Each honoree received a certificate and gold card.

Congratulations to those recognized for their years of service:

40 years of service: **Dennis Morrill**, Funds Administration.

30 years of service: **Sharon Baisden**, Funds Administration; **Cindy Burley**, Claims Processing; **Lorraine Dodds**, Funds Administration; **Ellen Feldpausch**, Funds Administration; and **Tim Gleason**, Claims Processing.

25 years of service: **Tammy Braun**, Claims Processing; **Sharon Burks**, Board of Magistrates (Detroit); **Cindy Burns**, Board of Magistrates (Traverse City); **George Chipman**, Funds Administration; **Kris Fry**, Board of Magistrates (Lansing); **Susan Gooden**, Detroit Mediation; **Shirley Parker**, Insurance, Compliance; and **Janet Theis**, Claims Processing

20 years of service: **Valerie Hart**, Funds Administration, and **Ivy Riley**, Detroit Mediation.

15 years of service: **Diane Courtier**, Funds Administration.



Ellen Feldpausch, Sharon Baisden, and Lorraine Dodds



Tim Gleason and Cindy Burley



Janet Theis, Shirley Parker and Tammy Braun



Celebrating Edmund Phillips’ 45 years of service are, sitting, l. to r.: Wanda Mayes, Ed Phillips and Lou Emmons; center row, Ruthanne Okun, James Amar, Micki Czerniak and Richard Ziegler; back row: Freda Mills, Jim Corbin, Tom Kreis, Ed Eppert, Margaret Paquet and James Spaulding.

DLEG Employees Are Part of Rapid Impact Assessment Team



The Department of Labor & Economic Growth helps staff the Michigan Rapid Impact Assessment Team (MRIAT).

This team is comprised of subject matter experts from across state government trained to assist local government in assessing damage in the wake of a major disaster. Specialized expertise can also address infrastructure damage that may be beyond the expertise available locally.

This effort is coordinated by the Michigan State Police, Emergency Management Division (EMD). The

MRIAT is not designed to be a first responder, but rather has supplemental assessment responsibilities under both the Michigan Homeland Security Strategy and the Michigan Emergency Management Plan, which are the responsibility of EMD.

In February, EMD conducted a six-hour training course on Chemical, Biological, Radiological,

Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) for members of MRIAT. Attending the training from DLEG were: Thomas Jones, Michigan State Housing Development Authority; Paul Proudfoot and Jeff Pillon, Michigan Public Service Commission; and Anthony Allam, Mike Mason and Mark Scott, Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

The training consisted primarily of classroom instruction with some hands-on instruction on the proper fitting and use of basic personal protection equipment (PPE).

"The training provided an overview of terrorism and terrorist tactics, with emphasis on the potential impacts of CBRNE agents and the procedures that would be employed in response," said Jeff Pillon, DLEG's emergency management coordinator.

"The team's assessment role would likely require it to conduct field operations in potentially hazardous conditions," Jeff said. "Each member of the team was dressed out in a protective suit and mask and had the opportunity to perform basic assessment tasks while wearing the gear."

Part of the training on Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) was devoted to hands-on instruction on the proper fitting and use of basic personal protection equipment.

What's Cool at DLEG

TAP Assists Separating Military Personnel

Did you know that the Department of Labor & Economic Growth has a program that helps recently separated military personnel make the transition to civilian life?

The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) provides these individuals with four days of re-orientation to the civilian business world, resume' preparation assistance, interviewing instruction and practice, job search techniques, and credentialing assistance.

TAP is a cooperative effort between the Bureau of Workforce Programs veterans' representatives and Selfridge Air National Guard Base. It is administered as part of the bureau's disabled veterans outreach worker and local veterans' employment representative programs. Currently, five veterans' representatives throughout the state provide this training. They have been certified through the National Veterans' Training Institute in Denver. TAP itself was developed and is certified by the U.S. Department of Labor/VETS.

Local Veterans Employment Representative Joe Gabelsberger, Disabled Veterans' Outreach Worker Ron Ross, and TAP Coordinator Scott Creswell recently received letters of appreciation from Gov. Jennifer Granholm for a job well done in assisting

our service members. In addition, one of the graduates of Michigan's first TAP class in October 2003 is featured in the national "Hire Vets First" website as a success story.

"Today's veterans are a very different group from their counterparts of 20 or 30 years ago," said Neil Cooper, veterans' coordinator for Michigan. "They are computer literate, most of them have training and cross training in several occupational specialties, and many of them either have done more than one tour of duty or are retiring after 20 years or more. They often are taught skills and given responsibilities in the military that would require many more years to obtain on the outside. Their skills and abilities are great, but they need to be given the tools and taught how to translate these skills and experience into civilian terms and college or vocational training credits.

"We are excited to be able to help in teaching them these skills and help them obtain employment," Neil said. "At this time we provide six TAP classes per year at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, assist with three Coast Guard sessions throughout the state, and assist with one or two Army sessions per year in Lansing."

People on the Move

Congratulations to **Tammy Stenzel**, who was recently promoted from general office assistant to departmental technician in the Workers' Compensation Agency Funds Administration Division. Tammy transferred to Funds Administration three-and-a-half-years ago after working in the Office of Financial and Insurance Services for 18 months as a communications assistant.

Congratulations to **Susan Schneider**, who was recently promoted from a general office assistant to a departmental technician in the Workers' Compensation Agency (WCA) Claims Processing Division. Susan's entire 18-year career has been with WCA, providing efficient service and customer assistance in the File Management, Data Management and Contested Cases Sections.

Congratulations to **James Nelson**, a conferee in the Compliance, Legal and FOIA Section of the Enforcement Division, Bureau of Commercial Services, who has been promoted to department manager for the Support Services Unit of the Compliance, Legal and FOIA Section. In his new role, Jim will supervise the support staff and tech staff who serve documents and coordinate the scheduling of compliance conferences and contested case hearings.

Congratulations to **Fred Kirkland**, who has been promoted as a 23 (g) Industrial Hygienist in the Consultation, Education and Training Division, Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA). Fred joined MIOSHA in 1987 as an industrial hygienist with the former Occupational Health Division (OHD), first in Grand Rapids, then in Lansing. In 1995, he transferred to the Asbestos Program. Fred will be part of the Southwest Region, and his official workstation is in Lansing.

Congratulations to **Ron Ray** in Management and Technical Services, MIOSHA, who has accepted the position of program manager for the Laboratory Equipment and Services Section (LESS), MIOSHA. Ron has 14 years of experience with LESS as a laboratory scientist and quality assurance officer.

Happy retirement wishes to **Nancy Benjamin**, executive secretary to the director of Media & Public Relations, who is retiring May 6 after 10 years of service. Nancy began her state career in 1995 as secretary to the media director at the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). She transferred to MSHDA's Manage-

ment and Reinvestment office in 1998, then received a promotion to her current position in 1999. Nancy was one of the originators of the DLEG Fun Committee.

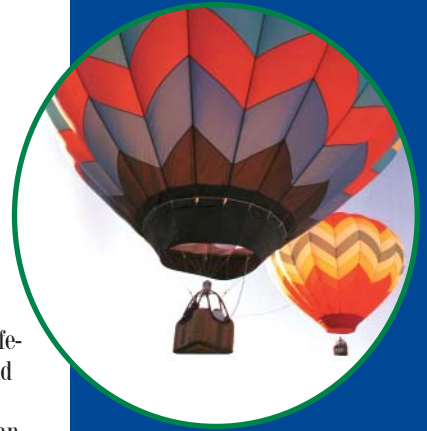
Happy retirement wishes to **Bernard Sznajder**, who is retiring April 22 after serving as a safety consultant with the Consultation, Education and Training Division of MIOSHA for the past 18 ½ years. Bernard's specialty has been providing organizations with tools and training needed to transform their safety effort into a safety management system by using "continual improvement" methods that have been used to improve quality and productivity at various organizations.

Happy retirement wishes to **Gerald Zimmerman**, a state employee for the past 35 years, who retired from MIOSHA last month. Jerry worked for the Michigan Liquor Control Commission as distribution manager for 27 years, then transferred to MIOSHA in 1997 as the Consultation, Education and Training (CET) grant program administrator. Under Jerry's leadership, the grant program provided more than \$1 million to 19 grantees.

Welcome to **Twyla Niedfeldt**, who is the new hard of hearing specialist for the Division on Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns. Twyla has a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling from Utah State University and a bachelor's degree in human services from Carroll College in Wisconsin. She has also received Certification in Deafness Studies from Northern Illinois University.

Best wishes to **Paivi Beverly**, a word processing assistant in the Real Estate Unit, Licensing Division, Bureau of Commercial Services, who has accepted a position with the Secretary of State. Paivi worked for Commercial Services for seven years, where she was responsible for customer service and processing applications for real estate salespersons.

Best wishes to **Wayne Weigel**, local veterans' employment representative and Project MOVE team member, Customer Service Division, Bureau of Workforce Programs, who has been appointed to a program specialist position with the U.S. Department of Labor/Veterans Employment and Training Service in Chicago. Wayne served for 10 years in the U.S. Army and separated as a sergeant prior to obtaining employment with the state of Michigan.



Nancy Benjamin

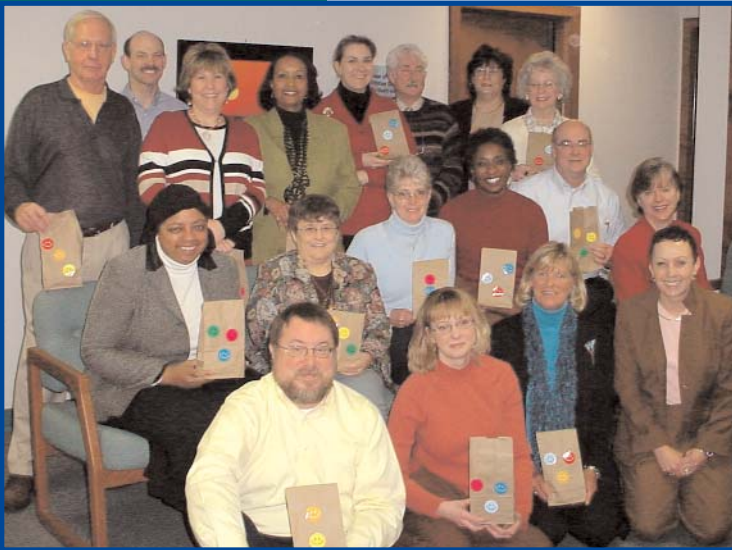


Tammy Stenzel



Susan Schneider

Special Deliveries Go to MRS Battle Creek Office Staff



Front row, l. to r.: Jack Robinson, counselor; Dawn Peevers, counselor; Vicki Rafferty, site manager; and Margie Hojara-Hadsell, district manager.
Center row, l. to r.: Allah Jean Truman, counselor; Connie VandePolder, counselor; Nancy Terry, business services representative; Leslie Dewberry, counselor; Jim Hall, Social Security specialist; and Lori Shader- Patterson, MRS Division IV director. Back row, l. to r.: John Bosker, counselor; Tim Allgor, independent living specialist; Tammi Tuttle, administrative assistant; Donna English, intake specialist; Melissa Mackinder, instructor; Linn Kempf, counselor; Deborah Forsyth, receptionist; and Therese Gunter, counselor.

The entire staff of the Battle Creek office of Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) received Special Deliveries from the Director on March 4. Lori Shader-Patterson, director of MRS's Region IV, and Margie Hojara-Hadsell, manager of MRS's Southwest District, nominated the group. Here is what Lori and Margie said:

"This office team exemplifies the spirit of teamwork and excellence. Led by Site Manager Vicki Rafferty, the team is commendable for its commitment to serving people with disabilities and the employment community of Calhoun, Barry and Branch counties. The diverse staff has developed an excellent intake and orientation process that has been seen as one of the best in the state. This process really starts our customers off with the information they need to understand what MRS is all about. This process was developed with self-directed work teams, who continue to meet to keep the process valuable for customers. All staff members have the responsibility and opportunity to lead a variety of meetings in their field of expertise, which helps them develop professionally and which also contributes overall to fine service delivery and customer service. Everyone takes responsibility for service and outcomes.

"The office has developed excellent relationships with community partners. The Workforce Development system, the ISDs, Summit Pointe Mental Health, Goodwill Industries, ARC, Veterans Affairs and the VA Hospital are all examples of their outreach to community partnerships that allow the office to better serve people with disabilities. The staff relationships with the Federal Center, Peckham Industries, and many other employers in the tri-county area have meant excellent employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

Battle Creek's performance to meet goals this past fiscal year shows this commitment. Average rehabilitations per counselor are 38, 14 higher than the minimum expected activity. The office exceeded its goal of 200 rehabilitations by 64 –132 percent of its goal ... There is no finer example of teamwork and excellence, commitment to employment for people with disabilities, and the development of relationships with community partners than this small, hardworking MRS office in Battle Creek."

'Special Delivery from the Director'

I would like to nominate the following staff member to receive a
'Great Job' acknowledgement from Director Hollister



Name of Nominee	Classification of Nominee
Office/Bureau	Office Location
Submitted By	Telephone of Nominator

The reason I am nominating this person:

Bureau/Office Director	Date

Bureau/Office Director: Please sign and return to DLEG Media & Public Relations, Ottawa Bldg., 4th Floor, Lansing 48909 - Fax: 517-241-1580

Special Delivery Recipients Enjoy Pizza Luncheon with the Director

Pizza, pop, and cookies were “specially delivered” for a luncheon held March 29 for 16 Greater Detroit employees who have received “Special Deliveries from the Director” since the recognition program began more than a year ago.

DLEG Director David C. Hollister hosted the event at Cadillac Place in Detroit to thank the honorees personally for their outstanding teamwork skills and contributions to state government.

Because more than 125 DLEG employees around the state have received Special Deliveries, luncheons are being planned for various locations this spring to give Director Hollister an opportunity to meet all of the recipients.



Special Delivery recipient Martha Moore, an executive secretary in the Unemployment Insurance Agency's Office of Trust Fund, Tax and Employer Compliance, poses with Director Hollister.

UIA Management Holds Meeting to Brainstorm Ideas for Improvement

The final meeting in the Unemployment Insurance Agency's (UIA) Customer Services Management Best Practices series was held at the Lansing Problem Resolution Office on March 4.

Fifty-one directors and team managers from the agency's three Remote Initial Claim Centers (RICCs) as well as UIA Director Sharon Bommarito and Customer Services Director Chris Peretto attended the meeting.

Late last summer, the managers held meetings at their RICCs to learn what their best management practices were and to identify areas where improvements could be made. The meetings' objectives were to stimulate open and honest communications, help improve uniform management practices within the centers, spread the best practices, and make improvements to increase RICC productivity.

In addition, the meetings gave the agency an opportunity to evaluate how well its transition from a branch office system to a call center system was working and to discuss how UIA could provide better customer service.

While the March meeting outlined many of the best practices and improvements that have been made, its main goal was to brainstorm ideas for addressing the five areas identified as needing improvement: teamwork and diversity, communication, consistency, accountability without counting, and improving the suggestion process.

The managers formed small work groups, which suggested improvements that could be made at each level of the organization for each of the five areas. At the end of the meeting, each group listed its top two ideas for improving each problem area.

The teams made a number of great suggestions, and the managers felt the process helped to improve customer service and create closer ties among the three centers. Customer Services now plans to do annual reviews at the RICCs.

While this was the last meeting in the series, it is not the last meeting of its kind. This same process will occur throughout UIA later this year.

SHORTS

Thanks to all of you who paid \$2 each week for the privilege of wearing jeans on Wednesdays during March. Your donations, totaling \$2,035, are helping to support Angel House, a place that cares for children in Ingham County who have been taken into protective custody because of sexual and/or physical abuse.

Casual Wednesday donations during the month of April will go to the Capital Area Humane Society. This charity, suggested by Diane Bauman

in the Liquor Control Commission, received the highest percentage of the vote — 21 percent — in our DLEG intranet poll. A lot of kitties and doggies will thank you for putting on those denims!

“Take Your Sons and Daughters to Work Day” is being observed across the nation on Thursday, April 28. DLEG is planning a lot of activities to make the day an exciting career exploration adventure. You will be provided with all of the details as they become available.



Commercial Services Celebrates St. Pat

The Bureau of Commercial Services' Fun Committee sponsored a St. Patrick's Day event filled with shamrocks, a pot of gold, and good old Irish stew.

Participants donated \$5 to receive a bowl of Irish stew for lunch and a shamrock with the name of a favorite charity to place in the pot of gold. One shamrock would be drawn from the pot.



Frances Cox with her prize-winning shamrock.

Frances Cox's shamrock was the winning entry, so the proceeds from the luncheon went to the Greater Lansing Food Bank in her name.

Fun Committee members planning the event were Pamela Mills, Enforcement; Lindsay Moyer, Audit and Administrative Services; Linda Pung, Licensing; Marcele Edington, Licensing; and Robin Armour, Corporation Division.

Two Greenbacks for a Green Dessert



Helping to organize the MIOSHA event were, l. to r., Amber Sweeney, Angie Tate, Mary Ann Howe, Kay Salazar, Denise Thelen and Vivian Bodiford.

Desserts in various shades of green were on hand at the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) office in Lansing on Thursday, March 17, St. Patrick's Day.

A "St. Patty's Morning Coffee Break" at 10 a.m. in one of MIOSHA's conference rooms offered employees their choice of a green dessert and a drink for a \$2 donation.

Proceeds will go towards activities to celebrate MIOSHA's 30th anniversary this year.

Employees Begin First Round in MCB Chili Competition



Connie Zanger stands beside her winning vegetarian chili.

Business Enterprise Program (BEP) employees in the Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB) train people to run their own food service businesses — such as cafeterias, snack stands and vending facilities — on property owned or leased by the state or federal government.

Because of their association with the culinary arts, BEP staff will be cooking the chili for MCB's entry in the Lansing Board of Water and Light's "Down by the River Chili Fest" this June.

So, to begin MCB's statewide recipe selection process, the Lan-

sing BEP staff held its chili competition on March 11.

The cook-off featured a generous pot of each of these handcrafted chilis: Cincinnati Chili, a spicy meat and bean chili including the secret ingredient of a square of unsweetened chocolate to enhance the spices, made by Lucy Edmonds; Chili Frederico, a moderately spicy chili of beef chorizo, beans and green peppers, made by Fred and Mark Wurtzel; Señor John's Chili, a turkey chili with beans and potatoes made by John McEntee; and "Kick It Up a Notch" Vegetarian Chili, with beans and an assortment of colorful fresh vegetables, made by Connie Zanger.

Approximately 20 volunteer judges voted Connie's chili the Lansing winner. Congratulations to you, Connie!

We Get Letters ... and E-Mails!

Martha Yoder and **Mike Mason** in the General Industry Safety & Health Division, Michigan Occupational Safety & Health Administration (MIOSHA) were recently commended by David Purchase, president of the Western Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs for their presentation explaining MIOSHA's role in responding to large-scale emergencies to assist the incident safety officer: "The program was informative and well presented. Thank you very much for MIOSHA's assistance in informing and educating our members on current events impacting Michigan's fire service, and we look forward to working with you and your staff in the future."

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A Detroit employer was complimentary about **Magnus Ndukwe** with MIOSHA's General Industry Safety & Health Division, after he conducted an Informal Settlement investigation: "Magnus has been a great help in dealing with these issues which I believe have been fully abated. I am glad for the assistance we have received from your division, which I thought was handled very professionally."

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Bridgett Dulude with the Midland Community Center sent this thank you note to **Sherry Scott** with MIOSHA's Consultation, Education and Training (CET) Division: "Thank you for participating in our recent Team Building Meeting at the Midland Community Center. Much good information was passed on, and we feel the activity was a success largely because of your contribution. We sincerely value the time and effort you provided for our meeting. Again, we offer our warmest thanks!"

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Eric Postmas with Hart & Cooley, Holland, sent this thank you e-mail concerning **Rob Stacey** in MIOSHA's CET Division, "Earlier this week, Rob paid a visit to our facility. Rob was invited to share info on power press safety. I found the daylong seminar to be quite helpful. The same conclusion was shared with my co-workers who also attended. I would not hesitate to call Rob again in the future."

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Pamela Orton with the Home Builders Association in Kalamazoo sent this thank you letter to **Deb Johnson**, CET Division, MIOSHA: "Thank you for teaching the Construction Safety Seminar on June 30th. The seminar attendees really enjoyed listening to you. I'm sure they learned a lot and will use what they've learned on the job site. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to teach."

.....

A client of the Michigan Commission for the Blind sent this letter to Gov. Jennifer Granholm: "I would like to tell you about my extraordinary educational experience at the **Commission for the Blind Training Center** in Kalamazoo last year. I'm 82 years old and have had macular degeneration for many years. As my eyesight became more impaired there were many things that I could no longer do for

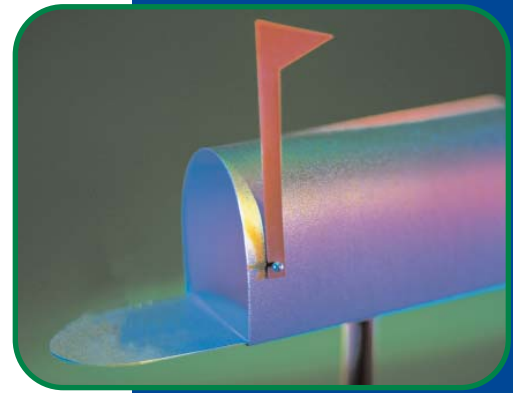
myself. These included reading, writing, driving, and sewing, crossing streets and using my computer. With the help of a most dedicated, caring, and excellent teaching staff I am now able to accomplish all of the above except driving using skills I learned at school, which compensate for my impaired vision. The classes I attended included cane mobility, keyboarding, computer training, communication, personal management, Braille, crafts, cooking and Industrial Arts. Following are some of the skills I learned that now enable me to live a richer, more independent life, which is one of the major goals of the staff. With skills learned in cane mobility, I can walk almost anywhere by myself, even crossing a street. I can now thread a needle in a nanosecond, which means that I can sew on a button and hem a skirt. Let me tell you that Braille is tough, but I learned to be able to make labels so I can find items I need. I learned how to brush my teeth, how to dial a phone, use a stove safely, use various methods of obtaining important information ... They may sound like simple achievements but they are very important to the person who cannot do them ... I was taught to use tools that I would never have dreamed of using, such as band saws, electric drills, and electric sanders. I made wind chimes, book-ends, a stool and a wooden holder for playing cards ... After extensive training in computer class I can now send Emails, type letters, obtain information on the internet, keep personal records, contact government and access business records ... I wish to thank the state of Michigan for providing such a wonderful educational experience. I also want to thank the superior teaching staff and support services for their commitment to their teaching goals."

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Bernie Kramer, West Region manager for the Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB), received this letter from a husband and wife: "We wanted you to know what a positive influence **Karyn Silky** [MCB counselor] has been for us as we adjusted to Leo's loss of sight. From both a physical and mental viewpoint, she has provided us with knowledge, understanding and hope. Karen has empathy for people and has been a blessing to us."

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A client of Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) sent this letter to **Dave Corcoran**, site manager of MRS's Bay City and Midland offices: "I can hear again! It is difficult to adequately express my profound gratitude to MRS for providing hearing aids for me. Your help went far beyond what I'd hoped for in genuine kindness. I am particularly grateful to **Alexa Matthews** [MRS counselor] because I know of the many demands on her time and yet she graciously gave me her complete attention and skilled consideration. 'Thank you' seems so inadequate for the precious gift of being able to hear again."



[More] Letters ... and E-Mails!

MRS Small Business Consultant **Jim Bunton** received a nice compliment in a focus group session held by the Michigan Rehabilitation Council at the Michigan Rehabilitation Conference last November. **Marlene Malloy**, executive director of the council, said: "Our focus group was entitled 'How Is Public VR [vocational rehabilitation] Working for You?' One of the responses to one of our questions was, 'More Jim Buntons around the state.' Pretty impressive!"

Cletonya LaGrand, a document examiner in the Document Review Section, Corporation Division, Bureau of Commercial Services, was complimented in this letter from a customer: "I wanted to praise one of your workers, Cletonya LaGrand. Cletonya has demonstrated patience, flexibility, and competence with changes I needed while filing for business names. While reserving names that reflect my startup company's product lines, I found myself having to re-negotiate my company's ownership. The negotiations are ending well, but as the back and forth shifts on the ownership played out, I wanted to hedge my bet that my new names would remain mine to use. More than once, I stopped, started, and changed directions

between assigning new names to an existing company or creating a new company, and the only reason I could do so and feel comfortable about it was because of Cletonya. She understood my changing needs, explained my options, and helped me navigate through uncertainty. I could not have asked for better help."

Susan Hood-Williams, regulation agent in the Detroit Regional Office, Enforcement Division, Commercial Services, was recognized by a customer in this letter: "Thank you very much for your efficient, effective, and very cooperative efforts to help resolve our difficulties with [a residential builder] ... When you first took over my case, I noticed a distinct change in four major ways. First, you had a very caring attitude about you, which conveyed to me you were interested in my plight (complaint). Second, you always returned my calls and kept good communication lines open. Third, as you coordinated the state of Michigan inquiries and my complaint, you exhibited fairness to both parties, [the contractor] and myself. Fourth, you were pleasant to me even when I voiced my frustration about [the builder] ... Thank you."

'Icebreaker Cruise' Brings Together Veterans' Representatives and Employers



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Biscayne Bay
in the Straits of Mackinac.

Gary Perkins, a veterans' employment representative with the Bureau of Workforce Programs who works at the Michigan Works! Service Center in Traverse City, is the Northern Region chairperson for Employer Support to the Guard and Reserve (ESGR).

ESGR is a Department of Defense organization that encourages and recognizes employer support of employees who voluntarily serve their country in the National Guard and Reserves.

On Feb. 24, the ESGR Northern Region organized an "Icebreaker Cruise" out of St. Ignace on U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Biscayne Bay. The Biscayne Bay is a 140-foot cutter with a crew of 17 and commanded by a Coast Guard lieutenant.

Twenty-four employers, business leaders and radio personalities attended the event, which included an ESGR briefing, a mission briefing by the Coast Guard, and three hours of actually breaking ice around and under the Mackinac Bridge.

"Since ESGR is a Department of Defense organization, there is a close working relationship with the Coast Guard, and they were extremely hospitable," Gary said.

The occasion gave Gary a public venue in which to present the "Above and Beyond" Award to Marty Thomson, president and CEO of First Federal Bank of Northern Michigan.

"It is an excellent fit for a Bureau of Workforce Programs veterans' representative to be involved with ESGR," Gary said. "Some of the same employers that we are educating about ESGR have veterans on their staff or are in a position to hire veterans. This same relationship benefits both causes."

Seventeen veterans' employment representatives across the state serve on the Michigan ESGR Committee.

DLEG Cliffhanger: Power Outage, Day Three

By Martin D. Alexander, CHS-III

Editor's Note: This is the third and final installment of a fictionalized account of a power outage.

Through the window, a glimmer of flashing brilliant red light prompts you to peer outside. A small, overly used car with a red, rotating beacon on top is parked on the driveway.

The sole occupant emerges from the car and, carrying a small duffel bag and wearing a firefighter-style coat, rushes to the front door. She knocks and, through the broken glass pane, identifies herself as a volunteer firefighter and paramedic. She enters and takes command.

She explains that, because of the current crisis, all emergency units are on dispatched calls. This call was received on her way into work. The power outage has caused panic in every area. Emergency services are delayed, creating a residual effect of public fear and paranoia in some communities.

This first responder quickly assesses the scene and, having obtained consent, stabilizes the woman, who, by now, has become talkative. Due to the power failure, the air pump on her tropical fish tank became nonfunctional. The fish are expensive, and she's had them a long time. They're almost like family to her.

She used a narrow hose to blow air into the tank to keep the fish alive. It was a battle as she monitored the water temperature as it was dropping. As she was becoming exhausted, the air supply going into the tank had less volume and force. She became dizzy and passed out.

The firefighter/paramedic makes preparations to transfer the woman to a small medical clinic nearby. The county hospital is overloaded, as are numerous emergency clinics. Because of the foresight of the Emergency Services Division of the

Michigan State Police, county emergency planners have been adequately trained. A small clinic is available and prepared to assist.

They foresaw a potential shortage of medical services during emergencies such as this, and made plans to avert the non-availability of medical care during a mass casualty crisis by harvesting every medical resource available.

As she is getting her coat on, the older woman hands you the key to her house. She points to the back bedroom and asks you to help yourself. This woman does not expect to be gone for long, but wants to share her resources. And, by the way, fix the broken windowpane in the front door.

The firefighter/paramedic and the older woman leave. You look in the back bedroom, finding it has been transformed into a supply room. Every imaginable item to use during an emergency is there: bottled water, packages of new blankets and bedding, enough canned and sundried food to feed a family of four for a month (it seems), at least 10 new and untouched medical supply kits, candles, matches, paper and books, games, and so on.

Shaking your head, you marvel at how some people make no provision whatsoever for an emergency, while other people, like this neighbor, go overboard in planning for the unexpected. You vow right then and there, once this crisis is over, to try to educate as many people as you can about prudent, practical things they can do to survive any kind of emergency.



Look Up These Websites for Helpful Tips in Planning for an Emergency

Tips for Being Prepared from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Surviving Electrical Power Outages—What You Can Do

Tips for Buying and Using a Portable Generator
A Family Preparedness Guide from the Emergency Management Division, Michigan State Police

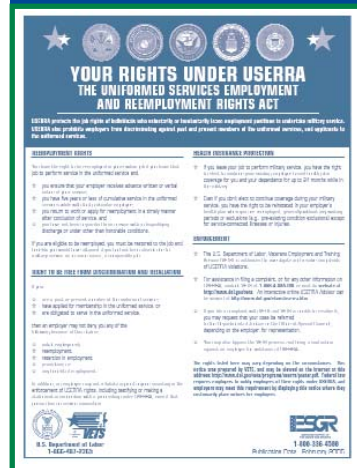
Poster Explaining Employment Rights of Military Now Available for Downloading

A poster that explains the rights of employees under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) is now available for downloading from the U.S. Department of Labor at <http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/userra/poster.pdf>.

USERRA protects the job rights of individuals who voluntarily or involuntarily leave employment positions to undertake military service. The law also prohibits employers from discriminating

against past and present members of the uniformed services and applicants to the uniformed services.

The Veterans Benefits Improvement Act, enacted by Congress this past December, mandates that employers provide a notice about USERRA to "all persons entitled to rights and benefits under USERRA." Employers may meet this obligation by posting the USERRA poster in a prominent place where employees customarily check for such information.



MCB Mentoring Program Provides Positive Role Models



The Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB) has started a series of meetings or “Mentoring Connections” designed to help its high school clients meet successful blind mentors.

Mentors are selected for students based on commonalities such as hobbies or employment interests. After initial introductions are made, the individuals are then open to continue the relationship as they choose.

“The important thing is beginning the process,” said Beth White, assistant supervisor for the East Region, which generally includes the eastern half of the Lower Peninsula. “With transportation issues and networking needs for jobs, the more contacts we all have, the more successful we can be.”

The first Mentoring Connections meeting took place in Flint on National Mentoring Day, Oct. 20, 2004. The small group met to share ideas, learn about each other, and begin an ongoing mentoring relationship. “We even have the same nickname — Red,” said one young woman after learning more about her mentor.

On Nov. 9, another Mentoring Connections meeting was held in Portage. Three students met at a

restaurant with their mentors. The meeting was so successful that the Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency has agreed to sponsor a follow-up on May 4.

On Feb. 11, MCB counselor Shannon Berkin organized a luncheon for six Ottawa County students and their mentors at a restaurant in Holland. The group discussed a variety of topics including their dreams and goals, the mentors’ job duties, accommodations, and college. Also in attendance were Shannon and MCB staff member Sherry Gordon as well as teacher consultants for Ottawa County Kamie Fortier and Cheryl Nametz.

One student remarked, “It amazed me, all the people in the working world who didn’t let their disability affect them. I hope to one day be like that for someone else.”

The experience was so positive that the Ottawa Area ISD has agreed to host the second meeting and provide lunch for the students and mentors.

Now that Mentoring Connections is off to a good start, a number of other MCB counselors have expressed an interest in setting up meetings in their own areas.

“This is a good way to provide our high school clients with positive role models,” said Beth White. “That’s what mentoring is all about.”

Energy Office Co-Sponsors ‘Smart Commute’



People who live or work in the Capital area are encouraged to explore biking, busing, carpooling and walking as safe, healthy, cost-efficient and environmentally friendly ways of commuting to work during the week of May 16–20.

Called “Smart Commute ‘05,” the weeklong event is being co-sponsored by DLEG’s Energy Office and the Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Committee (MIDMEAC).

Participation is voluntary and dependent on each person’s schedule, needs and ability.

Go to the links below for more information on how you can participate in Smart Commute ‘05:

- ❖ MDOT carpooling sites at highway exits: <http://www.mdot.state.mi.us/mappub/carpoolpark/>
- ❖ Busing by CATA: http://cata.org/route_info/system_map.html
- ❖ MIDMEAC Smart Commute ‘05: <http://www.midmeac.org/smartcommute>

“Please feel free to explore these commuting options outside of this week in May, too — especially with gasoline prices as high as they are,” says Shawn Wozniak in the Energy Office.

Saginaw RICC Commemorates Black History Month

Staff at the Unemployment Insurance Agency's Remote Initial Claims Center (RICC) in Saginaw celebrated Black History Month with their second annual Extravaganza Luncheon on Feb. 24 at the center.

One of the goals of RICC staff was to honor the struggles and successes of African-Americans, past and present. The Extravaganza sought to acknowledge and point out the contributions that African-Americans have made to all aspects of American life and to educate one another about important milestones in Black history.

Jeanette Brown, who chaired the Extravaganza committee, said, "We need to value our individual and collective diversity by demonstrating respect and acceptance for the similarities and differences within all people and share the beauty of diversity, culture and common humanity across all races."

A dramatic reading of "A Beautiful Black Woman" given by Sharetha Smith, an unemployment insurance examiner (UIE), was one of the event's highlights. UIE Dena Pruitt then led her colleagues of all colors in singing the Black National Anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

But probably the most eagerly anticipated activity was the soul food luncheon. Greens, cornbread,

rib tips, fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, black-eyed peas with ham hocks, and banana pudding were just some of the menu items.

Other Extravaganza activities were art exhibits, trivia games/contests and daily Black history facts. A very special exhibit was a Martin Luther King, Jr., mural on which staff wrote their own dreams, ranging from the elusive wish of being off the phone to eradicating racial discrimination.

"Although great strides and progress have been made, there are still miles to go; but events like the Saginaw RICC's annual Extravaganza Luncheon give hope that the future holds life, liberty and prosperity for all people!" said Dena Pruitt.



The committee for the Extravaganza Luncheon included, l. to r., front row: Patryce Collins-Bray, Diana Oland, Sharetha Smith, Jeanette Brown and Victoria Harris; back row: Deborah Coleman, Mary Scott, Tracy Pryor, Haili Brown, Susan Bigras, Cheryl Davis, Belinda Hawkins, Denise Feldman, Vivian Brown, Dena Pruitt, Louann Molaski and Nova Govan.

Improving the Safety of State Workers

The Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) and the Office of the State Employer — Employee Health Management Division (EHM) signed a formal alliance last month establishing a collaborative relationship to improve workplace safety and health in state government.

The key goals of the alliance are promoting enhanced awareness of worker safety and

health to state department directors; developing education and training opportunities; sharing EHM summary accident data with all department safety and health coordinators to demonstrate the success of implementing effective safety and health management systems; and disseminating safety and health information through print and electronic media, e-mail and links from MIOSHA and OSE websites.

WMU Accepting Doctoral Study Applications

If you've been considering the idea of earning a doctorate in public administration, now is the time to look into Western Michigan University's Lansing Branch program.

WMU's Ph.D. in public administration program accepts students only every other year, and the next cycle begins in August 2005.

Seminars and courses run from 6 to 9 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Lansing Branch campus, located at 6105 W. St. Joseph Highway.

The primary admissions deadline is April 30. Please call (517) 327-1480 for more information.